



The Superior Court

222 E. WEBER AVENUE, ROOM 303
STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA 95202

*Hon. Robin Appel
Presiding Judge*

TELEPHONE
(209) 468-2827

January 3, 2011

Dear Family Law Litigant,

Family law cases are very stressful for the parties involved. There are ways to lessen the stress of your divorce, property division, custody, support or other family law matters by considering other dispute resolution methods. That means you may be able to settle your case without going to court. When you are able to do that it means you have greater control over the outcome of your case because you are directly involved with the decisions that are made.

Some ways to resolve your case without going to court are having attorneys negotiate directly, having a neutral third party help both sides negotiate a solution through mediation or using a method such as collaborative law. Alternatives to going to court allow you to participate directly to resolve your case, may be quicker than going to court, may be less expensive than going to court, may end with a better relationship with your former partner and will likely be much less stressful for you.

It is to your benefit to consider opportunities to reduce conflict and expenses in the Family Law process. I encourage you to focus on what is most important. That means considering the best interests of your children and not using them to hurt the other parent. It also means finding ways to resolve your property and financial issues in a way that is realistic. Your agreements do not have to be perfect but they do have to be acceptable to both sides. The court offers mediation only regarding custody and visitation issues. There are community resources for you to consider to handle other aspects of your disputes.

Regardless of what methods you choose to resolve your case, try to remember that this difficult time in your life can be made better by realistic expectations and sincere efforts to resolve your case in the most amicable manner possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robin Appel", written over a horizontal line.

Hon. Robin Appel
Presiding Judge
Superior Court of San Joaquin County

RA:tc